



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 143

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1997

No. 21

## House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. CHAMBLISS].

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, February 25, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable SAXBY CHAMBLISS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

### MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] for 5 minutes.

### EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks I have been coming down here to the House floor to discuss the topic of education in America. As most Americans know by now, the President and congressional Democrats have developed a comprehensive plan to address the Nation's most pressing education needs. To date, the Republicans in Congress have given very little indication of their thoughts on the President's plan. Despite indications from the American people that education is indeed one of the most impor-

tant issues facing Congress today, Republican leaders have ignored Democratic calls to immediately begin examining our proposal to strengthen education in America. Nor have they offered any plan of their own to address the varieties of challenges confronting our education system.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on how the President's plan will affect the lives of people from my home district, New Jersey's Sixth Congressional District, which comprises part of Monmouth and Middlesex Counties. I want to do this by sharing two letters, one from each county of my district, that touch on two prevalent education problems which the President and congressional Democrats have developed plans to confront.

The first of these problems concerns the difficult time many parents are encountering while trying to meet the runaway costs of college education. Not too long ago, Mrs. Barbara A. Pflug of West Keansburg wrote to me trying to make sense of the challenges she and her husband are trying to overcome. She writes in a letter to me:

Dear Congressman PALLONE: Please try to help me understand what is happening. My oldest son has just finished his freshman year at Rutgers University. We are both teachers and have worked continually for the past 25 years. We had planned to save money for our boys' college expenses but never had that leftover money to invest. We do not have an expensive life-style. The cost of living in this area has continually gone up. We do not spend our money foolishly. We did not take a vacation and cannot afford a new car. Our properties and other taxes are sky high and we know we pay extra for things like automobile insurance and hospitalization to help people who cannot afford it. We are told that Social Security may not be there when we need it and to start saving for our retirements. We need three lifetimes of working to do all of these things. We should be saving now for our retirement, but that is out of the question with three boys who need to be college educated. The bulk of responsibility is on the parents and we cannot even claim this expense on our income

tax. It is an overwhelming hardship. I just do not get it. Please tell us what we are doing wrong.

That is from their letter.

Well, I want to say that Mrs. Pflug and her husband are doing nothing wrong. Like millions of parents across the country, they are working hard to make ends meet, sacrificing so that their children will lead better lives. As Mrs. Pflug explains: The bulk of the responsibility is on the parents when we cannot even claim this expense on our income tax. It is an overwhelming hardship.

Mr. Speaker, the President and congressional Democrats realize that, as Mrs. Pflug put it, the overwhelming hardship of paying for college is indeed an expense that every American family ought to be able to claim on their income tax. To that end, we proposed a \$1500 refundable tax credit for all students in their first year of college and another \$1500 in the second year if they stay off drugs and earn a B average in the second year. We are also proposing a \$10,000 tax deduction for any year a family has education expenses.

I would say to Mrs. Pflug that the Democrats have recognized the need for education tax breaks and have developed a plan. I would also encourage Mrs. Pflug to encourage her family to keep working hard. Democrats in Congress are working hard for families like hers; we are waiting for Republicans to join us in making education tax breaks for the working family available so their lives will be just a little better and a little easier.

The other letter, Mr. Speaker, I want to read from today concerns the dire need many schools across the country have for repair or outright replacement:

"Dear FRANK," writes Ms. Ann Ricciardi of Edison, the largest town in my district, "I look to anyone willing to speak for children and their parents for help in resolving a critical problem

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

H591